

## TIMBER RESERVES.

That of the West Needs Better Protection.

Violation of the Law in Destruction of Timber Reported to the Washington Office.

The simplicity of the means by which permits to cut timber are allowed is a constant temptation for dishonest people and lumber syndicates to despoil the public forests of the country. Various attempts have been made to remedy this evil by legislation, but all measures introduced for this purpose have been sidetracked, doubtless by members of congress who are interested in the lumber business themselves.

As the law now stands, a man who wishes to cut timber merely has to apply to the interior department at Washington, either through the nearest land office or directly to the department, giving the affidavits of four persons that the timber they desire to cut is necessary for local supplies. They must also make it appear that this timber can be cut without injury to the public, that is, that it will not interfere with local water conditions and other matters of this sort, and that they have advertised in two local newspapers, if there are two published in the section in which the land is situated. If everything seems satisfactory, the secretary of the interior issues a permit specifying the minimum size of the trees to be cut, the percentage of each class represented on the tract, and the manner of their cutting, and many other points. This license is good for one year, and is renewable indefinitely at the secretary's discretion.

All of this affords very little protection for the government in a thinly settled country. The four affidavits can be easily obtained, and may be made by the men in the deal themselves. In many western counties there are not two newspapers, or if there are, they do not circulate outside the towns in which they are printed. Sometimes the first intimation a settler receives that such a permit has been granted is when the water supply of his home becomes contaminated by passing through a lumber camp or a clearing in which unlawful sheep-herding has succeeded the cutting down of the timber. It is too late then to do anything. He may send a protest to Washington, but by the time his communication has been through the circumlocution and red tape of the land office, and a special agent sent out to investigate the trouble, and this report has been examined and the land office is all ready to act, the damage has been done.

There is such a small force of special agents at the disposal of the interior de-

partment that no adequate watch can be kept on the public forests of the country. All attempts to increase this force are defeated in congress. Last year the senate cut down the item appropriated by the house for this purpose from \$85,000 to \$60,000, to gratify a petty piece of spite of Senator Gorman, it is said, who was disappointed in securing one of these places for one of his Maryland henchmen. Of course it cannot be denied that often in the past these agents have been worse than useless, but there is no reason why competent men could not be put in such positions and held accountable for their actions. The money spent in this way would come back four-fold in fines and recovery of damages where thefts had been committed.

The McRae bill, which was introduced in the house last winter, had for its ostensible object the protection of forests and provides for the sale of government timber under the supervision of the secretary of the interior. It also made provision for a special fund to employ inspectors. This bill, however, was open to certain objections, as it gave the secretary of the interior too much discretion in the sale of timber and left loop holes for fraud. It was defeated through the efforts of Representative Pickler of South Dakota.

The sheep herders have proved to be even more destructive to forests than timber thieves in many sections. They frequently in the fall set fire to the woods to promote a vigorous growth of young leaves and herbage the next year.

The department has received many protests from the neighborhood of the Battlement mesa reserve in Colorado and San Bernardino reserve in California, and many others, declaring that sheep herders had rendered the waters below unfit for use by pasturing sheep on the reservations.

Propositions have been made to use the United States troops for the protection of the government forest, but without the authority of congress the secretary of war did not care to take the responsibility of utilizing the idle soldiers for this purpose.

In the Black Hills region in South Dakota it is asserted that the Homestake Mining company has been making use of the mineral land timber for its private benefit. Under the law, wood can be cut from mineral lands for domestic and mining purposes without the preliminary of taking out a permit. This company, it is said, has not paid particular attention as to whether the timber it has cut has been on mineral lands within the meaning of the law, but has gone ahead cutting timber everywhere it pleased on the theory that all lands in a mining country must be mineral in character. It has even built a narrow gauge railroad 20 miles long which, for eight months in the year, does nothing but haul timber from the forests down to the mines.

## STATE GOVERNORS.

Nineteen Democrats, Twenty-three Republicans, One Democratic-Populist and One Silverite  
As It Now stands.

Of the 21 states that elected governors, 17 of the successful candidates were republicans, 2 democrats, one democratic-populist and 1 silverite.

The states in which republicans take the place of democratic governors are: Connecticut, Delaware, New York, Pennsylvania, Tennessee and Wisconsin. A democrat displaces a republican as governor of California. Populists give way to republicans in Colorado, Kansas, North Dakota and Wyoming. The list of governors of the states is as follows:

Alabama—William C. Oates, democrat.  
Arkansas—J. P. Clark, democrat.  
California—James H. Budd, democrat.  
Colorado—Albert W. McIntyre, republican.  
Connecticut—O. Vincent Coffin, republican.  
Delaware—Joshua H. Marvil, republican.  
Florida—Henry L. Mitchell, democrat.  
Georgia—W. Y. Atkinson, democrat.  
Idaho—William J. McConnell, democrat.  
Illinois—John P. Altgeld, democrat.  
Indiana—Claude Matthews, democrat.  
Iowa—Frank D. Jackson, republican.  
Kansas—Edmund N. Morrill, republican.  
Kentucky—John Young Brown, democrat.  
Louisiana—Murphy J. Foster, democrat.  
Maine—Henry B. Cleaver, republican.  
Maryland—Frank Brown, democrat.  
Massachusetts—Frederic T. Greenhough, republican.  
Michigan—John T. Rich, republican.  
Minnesota—Knute Nelson, republican.  
Mississippi—John M. Stone, democrat.  
Missouri—William J. Stone, democrat.  
Montana—John F. Richards, republican.  
Nebraska—Silas A. Holcomb, democratic-populist.  
Nevada—John F. Jones, Silverite.  
New Hampshire—Charles A. Busiel, republican.  
New Jersey—George T. Werts, democrat.  
New York—Levi P. Morton, republican.  
North Carolina—Elias Carr, democrat.